

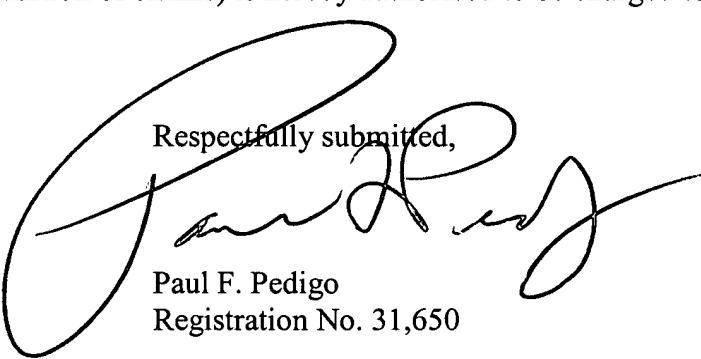
REMARKS

This application is a continuation of Application No. 10/098,738 which was filed on March 15, 2002. All of the pending claims of the parent application had been rejected as unpatentable based on the combination of Masuda et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,248,415 and Shiltz U.S. Patent No. 847,518. Since then, additional references have been cited in Japan and an Information Disclosure Statement accompanies this Preliminary Amendment regarding those references.

By this Preliminary Amendment, Applicant is canceling the previously pending claims and submitting a new set of claims herewith which are new Claims 18 – 45. Also, accompanying this Preliminary Amendment is the Declaration of George Tchobanoglous, Ph.D. filed under Rule 132 regarding the Shiltz and Masuda references.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on March 31, 2004.

Grace R. Rippy